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WASHINGTON OBSTETRICAL AND GYNAECOLOGICAL SOCIETY.  
FRANCIS ASBURY ASHFORD, M. D.

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# In Memoriam.

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FRANCIS ASBURY ASHFORD, M. D.

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*Born September 19, 1841.*

*Died May 19, 1883.*

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WASHINGTON, D. C.

GIBSON BROTHERS, PRINTERS.

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# THE WASHINGTON OBSTETRICAL AND GYNÆCOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

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MAY 18, 1883.

The Society met, and was called to order by the President, Dr. Busey.

After the adoption of the minutes, Dr. C. E. Hagner rose and said that the Society had not quite passed through the first year of its existence and already found itself face to face with a great sorrow, due to the serious and probably fatal illness of one of our best beloved members, Dr. ASHFORD. As far as he was concerned, he felt unable to discuss any question to-night, and he deemed it becoming that the Society adjourn to next Friday, in respect to the member now so seriously and dangerously ill.

On motion, the Society adjourned to Friday next.

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## SPECIAL MEETING.

MAY 19, 1883.

The Society convened in special meeting at 8 P. M., at the office of Dr. C. E. Hagner, and was called to order by the President.

Present: Drs. Busey, Acker, Harrison, S. S. Adams, Magruder, Smith, Hagner, Fry, McArdle, Barker, Tyler, Beale, Bromwell, W. W. Johnston, and J. T. Johnson.

Dr. Busey, in announcing the purpose for which the meeting had been called, stated that the regular meeting of yesterday had been adjourned because of the serious illness of one of the members. We had then separated with hearts filled with sorrow and apprehension in regard to the termination of the terrible illness of our brother. To-night our fears have been realized, and he had invited the members to this meeting that we might give expression in fitting words to our great sorrow, and to tender our heartfelt sympathy to the bereaved family of our late associate and friend. As to himself, he felt that he could not trust himself to speak words of eulogy, for he had been too recently at the scene of his suffering and death, and then, too, he also knew that his grief was but the reflection of the grief of those who suffered still more. Still he could not pass the sad fact in the history of this Society that during the first year of its existence it had lost by death its foremost and ablest member, and at the early age of forty-two years—at the very time of life when he had reached that fulness of experience, knowledge, and skill so needed and useful to himself, to this community, and to us; just when he was grasping, with a firm hand, the topmost round of a brilliant professional career, and seemed ready to leap into an enduring reputation. And what was sadder still, he not only died in his prime, but left a family of five little children, the youngest of whom will never know him.

He submitted to the Society the propriety of uniting with others in giving expression to the sorrow which all so deeply feel.

Dr. J. Taber Johnson said: On the occasion of our regular meeting, occurring only last night, Dr. Hagner moved

an adjournment of our Society on account of the severe illness of Dr. ASHFORD. He suggested that we were on the verge of a great sorrow, which would probably soon come upon us in the death of one of our ablest and best beloved members.

The sorrow was now upon us, and since the affecting remarks of the President, in which he had officially announced our bereavement, his emotions were such as to prevent any extended or fitting eulogium, although we had been called together for the purpose of paying respect to the memory of our deceased Associate.

Other members had been more intimate with Dr. ASHFORD, and hence would be able to speak more emphatically of his near and inner life, but there was no one present who had a higher regard for him as a physician, a friend, and a public-spirited citizen. He could not find words at present to express the deep sorrow in his heart at the great calamity which had overtaken us. He had simply risen to move that a committee of three be appointed to prepare and report resolutions expressive of our feelings.

The motion was adopted, and the President appointed Drs. J. T. Johnson, W. W. Johnston, and McArdle as the committee, who reported the following:

Whereas in the inscrutable wisdom of Divine Providence our beloved member and brother, Dr. F. A. ASHFORD, has been suddenly removed from us by death; and

Whereas it becomes the sad duty as well as privilege of his fellow-members in the Washington Obstetrical and Gynaecological Society to meet together in their accustomed place to express their sorrow, recount his virtues, and do honor to his memory: Therefore,

*Resolved*, That we deeply deplore his loss. Dr. ASHFORD was one of the founders of our Society and one of its most interested and talented members. In no department of medicine was he more distinguished than as an obstetrician and gynaecologist. His long experience in the organization and practice of the Columbia Hospital enabled him to bring to his daily work an unusually large experience, and his constantly increasing skill was much sought by his associates in the performance of obstetrical and gynaecological operations. His valuable aid was never sought in vain. Distance, labor, or the question of reward was not an obstacle to his ready response to all such calls for his counsel or assistance. Indeed, to the latest hour his strength would permit, was he engaged in the practice of his profession, and it is not improbable that the overtaxing of his energies had much to do with the sudden precipitation of the dread calamity which has overtaken us. The affectionate confidence of his many patients in this field of practice was the best evidence of their appreciation of his virtues as a gentleman and his skill as a physician. We take a just pride in his exalted reputation, and more than others mourn the loss of our deceased friend, who was in the truest sense of the word an educated gentleman and a skillful physician, a kind friend and a wise counsellor.

*Be it also resolved*, That we attend his funeral in a body, and that a copy of these preambles and resolutions be sent as an expression of our heartfelt sympathy to his bereaved family.

Dr. W. W. Johnston, in moving the adoption of the resolutions, said that they were couched in terms well fitted to express the feeling of the Society. It would take much time, indeed, to do justice to the merits of our deceased brother. His worth cannot be better brought out than by thinking of what one can take his place. Who among us

can fill the niche which he has carved for himself by his life-work as surgeon and gynaecologist? In whatever department he labored, he reached a degree of perfection which few attain.

The Children's Hospital was the scene of his greatest successes in operative surgery. Here he devoted himself with the most marked assiduity to the study of the diseases of the joints, and the brilliant results he obtained in their treatment is at once one of the best monuments of his fame, and the chief pride of the Hospital.

And so it was in gynaecology. His connection with the Columbia Hospital gave him the opportunity to study the diseases of women, and to become familiar with the operative measures for their relief. Out of this grew self-confidence and skill in the performance of the most difficult and delicate operations, and from far and near his wise counsel and practiced dexterity were sought.

In all movements looking to the public good, Dr. ASHFORD was a foremost worker. The plan of building a General Hospital in Washington was agitated for many years, and, although the need of such an institution was always felt, the project never neared a successful issue until ASHFORD took the helm. The present hopeful outlook of the Garfield Hospital may, in great part, be traced to his earnest and persistent effort.

Personally, Dr. ASHFORD was well known to each one of us; by many loved; by all admired.

If it be true that the dread archer loves a shining mark, he could not have better aimed his shaft than when he laid ASHFORD low.

Dr. Lachlan Tyler said that his acquaintance with Dr.

ASHFORD was limited, but he always found him agreeable and attractive. He impulsively felt that Dr. ASHFORD was a man of courage and a gentleman, and deliberately, that he was a methodical and skillful physician and surgeon.

The resolutions were then adopted.

It was moved that they be published in the daily press.  
Adopted.

It was also moved that a committee of three (the President to be the chairman) be appointed to prepare a memorial of Dr. ASHFORD. Adopted.

The President then appointed Drs. W. W. Johnston and McArdle on the committee.

C. H. A. KLEINSCHMIDT,  
*Secretary.*

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#### OTHER MEMORIAL NOTICES.

##### CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL.

At a meeting of the Board of Directors and Attending Physicians of the Children's Hospital, held at the hospital building May 20th, the following resolutions were adopted:

Whereas God in his infinite wisdom has taken from us our late beloved friend and associate, Doctor FRANCIS ASBURY ASHFORD, who died at his home in this city on the morning of May 19, 1883, in the very prime and flower of manhood, and almost at the beginning of what promised to be a grand career of usefulness and benefaction,

And whereas as one of the founders of the Children's Hospital, and its attending surgeon from its establishment, he has been one of its most earnest friends and faithful officers and advocates,

And whereas in our constant intercourse with him we have learned to prize his genuine nobility of character, his

earnest pursuit of the ideal of his profession, and his uniform and faithful devotion to the little ones whose misfortunes brought them under the care of his great skill ;

And whereas we, the directors and physicians of the Children's Hospital, deem it a privilege as well as a duty to place upon record our appreciation of the man, the surgeon, the friend, and the officer, as we knew him, and as well to offer our sympathy to his bereaved family : therefore,

*Resolved*, That in the death of Dr. ASHFORD we are called upon to contemplate the loss of a man gentle, considerate, pure, and noble in all the walks of life ; a surgeon learned, skillful, devoted, progressive, and ardent in behalf of suffering humanity ; a friend true, generous, faithful, and untiring, and an officer wise in judgment, prudent in counsel, and zealous in activity, to whom the institution owes much of its great success and usefulness.

*Resolved*, That we extend to his widow and family our sincere sympathy in their affliction ; that the officers, directors, and staff of the Hospital attend the funeral in a body ; that the Hospital building be draped in mourning ; that the name of the deceased be inscribed upon the mural tablet in the main hall ; that a copy of these resolutions be transmitted to his widow, and that they be furnished to the press of the city.

*Resolved*, That a memorial pamphlet containing the proceedings of this meeting and a sketch of the life of our late associate be published by this institution, and that the chair appoint a committee of three to prepare and edit the same.

Test :

REGINALD FENDALL,  
*Secretary.*

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BOARD OF LADY VISITORS OF THE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL.

At a special meeting of the Board of Lady Visitors, held on Monday, May 21st, the following preamble and resolutions were unanimously adopted :

Whereas the death of Dr. FRANCIS A. ASHFORD has deprived this Hospital of one of its earliest, most efficient, and faithful friends, and the afflicted children of a good and skill-

ful physician, whose kindness cheered, while his professional ability relieved their sufferings, and has deprived this Board of an earnest co-worker, a wise and trusted counsellor, we should give some expression to our appreciation of the loss we thus all sustain, (with a large portion of this community,) and mingle our sorrow in truest sympathy for the widow and orphans upon whom this crushing blow has fallen so heavily: Therefore

*Be it resolved:*

*First.* That in the retrospection, which this sad event awakens, we recall Dr. ASHFORD's career as a devoted physician, ever at his post of duty, fulfilling every personal obligation with exceptional fidelity, and always extending help, and encouraging sympathy to all within the sphere of his usefulness.

*Second.* That we all cherish with tender and grateful recollection the many instances of his personal kindness and wise counsel, when our efforts in the interests of the Hospital needed sympathy and guidance, and we take a mournful pleasure in testifying to his unvarying responsiveness to all demands upon his time and talents.

*Third.* That we feel that the Children's Hospital has sustained an irreparable loss in the death of Dr. ASHFORD, yet humbly bow before the visitation of an inscrutable Providence, which has removed him from the scene of his usefulness, in the full vigor and strength of manhood.

*Fourth.* That we tender to his bereaved widow our deep and heartfelt sympathy, mingling our tears over the bier of one whose quenched light has left a pervading gloom beyond the home which he brightened by his daily presence and domestic virtues.

*Fifth.* That as a fit and enduring memorial of his "labor of love," and our affection for his memory, we will endow a bed in the "surgical ward" of the Hospital to be called The Ashford Memorial Bed.

*Sixth.* That the Secretary be requested to transmit a copy of these resolutions to the family of Dr. ASHFORD.

FANNY RICKETTS,  
*President.*

M. A. B. KENNEDY,  
*Secretary.*

## MEDICAL SOCIETY OF D. C.

At a special meeting of the Medical Society of the District, held May 20th, the following resolutions were adopted:

*Resolved*, That the tidings of the death of FRANCIS A. ASHFORD, in the very meridian of his activity and usefulness, have been received by the members of this Society with extreme sorrow.

*Resolved*, That in this sad event we recognize and deplore the loss, not only to this Society, but to the whole medical profession and this community, of one, the elements of whose moral and intellectual character were such as to command the esteem and respect of all. That by the amiability of his disposition, the urbanity of his manners, and his ever considerate kindness, he had acquired the affectionate regard of all associated with him; that he has been to his patients, not only a medical adviser in sickness, but a companion, friend, and counsellor in health; that his proficiency and skill in his profession, together with the energy and activity with which he prosecuted his duties, his acknowledged abilities as a teacher, his untiring zeal in forwarding the interests of the various institutions of learning and charity with which he has been connected, render his death a deprivation to this people which can never be over-estimated.

*Resolved*, That by this dispensation our Society has lost one of its most valued members, one whom it has delighted to honor, and whose absence from its deliberations will be long remembered with affectionate regret.

*Resolved*, That we tender to his bereaved family our sincere sympathy in this severe affliction.

Addresses were made by Drs. Busey, McArdle, Schaefer, Burnett, Leach, Lovejoy, Burrows, S. S. Adams, C. E. Hagner, and others.

## MEDICAL DEPARTMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGETOWN.

At a meeting of the Faculty of the Medical Department of the University of Georgetown, held May 21st, 1883, the following resolutions were adopted:

Whereas it has pleased Almighty God to call hence our beloved associate and brother, FRANCIS ASBURY ASHFORD, M. D., Dean of the Medical Faculty and Professor of Surgery in the Medical Department of the University of Georgetown: Therefore,

*Resolved*, That the Faculty desire to record among the archives of the Institution their testimony as a memorial of his virtues and abilities.

Dr. ASHFORD was ever kind, cordial, and generous to all who sought the benefit of his advice. Towards his professional brethren his bearing was so open, considerate, and honorable that he was deeply endeared to the whole professional body, by every member of which his loss will be felt as a personal bereavement.

He was ever mindful of the dignity and nobility of his calling, and was the life and soul of every enterprise looking to the advancement and utility of the Medical Profession, and his death will be felt and deplored by this entire community.

Dead at the early age of forty-two years, he had already wrought his way to a position at the head of his profession. As a medical scholar and teacher he was extensively and accurately learned and faithful, diligent and conscientious. As a medical and surgical practitioner he was able, prompt, and skillful, and the Faculty feel that in his death the Institution has sustained great loss.

The Faculty are deeply impressed with a sense of the truth that the grief of widowhood and orphanage is too sacred for intrusion, but we may be permitted to hope that the Divine hand which tempers the wind to the shorn lamb may soften this extreme calamity to the wife and children of our departed friend and brother, and to them we tender our respectful sympathy.

## COLUMBIA HOSPITAL.

At the meeting held June 11, 1883, Mr. Solomons offered the following resolutions, which were unanimously adopted:

With no formal phrases expressive of our grief, but with aching hearts and eyes suffused with tears, we record in words, which at best are weak and unsatisfactory, how deeply we all feel the loss by death of our late associate and sincere friend, Dr. FRANCIS ASBURY ASHFORD. He who began his professional career within the portals of this building, and who always reflected credit upon Columbia Hospital both as director and surgeon; he who was ever kind to the afflicted, and courteous and self-sacrificing to his associates; he who was without guile, and did good for its own sweet sake; may his bright example continue to strengthen and stimulate exertion in behalf of all that is pure and ennobling, and so perpetuate in kind the memory of the man who was among the few, the immortal few, who were not born to die.

To his widow, children, and family we extend our loving sympathy, and request that these words be communicated to them by the Secretary of the Board of Directors, and that they be spread at length upon the minutes of the proceedings of this meeting.

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## WASHINGTON TRAINING SCHOOL FOR NURSES.

At a meeting of the Medical Faculty of the Washington Training School for Nurses, held July 10th, 1883, the following resolutions were unanimously adopted:

In view of the decease of our late lamented colleague, Dr. F. A. ASHFORD, it is hereby—

*Resolved*, That in the death of our honored associate, the Faculty of the Washington Training School for Nurses has been deprived of the assistance and co-operation of one on whose professional ability and proficiency as a teacher we had greatly depended to further the progress and prosperity of this School.

*Resolved*, That in the decease of Dr. ASHFORD we deplore the loss of a friend whose good qualities, both of mind and heart, had much endeared him to all of us.

*Resolved*, That a copy of these resolutions be spread upon the minutes, and also that a copy be sent to the family of the deceased.

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#### GARFIELD MEMORIAL HOSPITAL.

Assembled together by an official summons for the performance of duties imposed by our charter, we are confronted by the announcement of the death of Dr. FRANCIS A. ASHFORD, to whose personal exertions the foundation of this general hospital in a great degree is indebted.

While his professional brethren and co-laborers in long-established institutions for the alleviation of human suffering have testified to his valuable services and unselfish devotion in the line of his profession and the field of charity, it is our office to mourn over the loss of a leading spirit in a new undertaking of benevolence and beneficence: Therefore,

*Be it resolved*:

*First*, That it is due to the memory of Dr. ASHFORD to give a sincere expression of our appreciation of his services in the institution of this hospital, and to say that to him, more than to any other, is due the credit of initiating this undertaking, and, by his unobtrusive energy, of putting it in the path of success.

*Second*, That we profoundly mourn his loss as a man, a physician, and an associate, and shall cherish his memory with respect and affection.

*Third*, That we tender our sympathy to his widow, in this her hour of immeasurable affliction.

A true copy.

B. G. LOVEJOY,  
*Secretary.*

FRANCIS ASBURY ASHFORD was born September 19th, 1841, at "Sommerville," the residence of his maternal grandfather, Nicholas Darne, in Fairfax County, Virginia. In 1846 he came with his father, the late Craven Ashford, to this city, where he lived until the spring of 1856, when, his father having purchased his birthplace, he returned with him to the ancestral home. During the last four years of his father's residence in this city, young Ashford attended the Fourth District Public School, of which John E. Thompson was principal.

He did not remain long with his father on the farm, but returned to the city and resided for several years with his brother Mahlon. During this period he attended the Union Academy, then located at the corner of Fourteenth street and New York avenue, of which Z. Richards was principal. In 1859 or '60 he returned to Virginia and took charge of the farm, and devoted such time as he could spare from his farming duties to intellectual cultivation.

When the war broke out he joined the Confederate army and followed the fortunes of his native State from Ball's Bluff to Petersburg. He participated in nearly all the important engagements between the Army of the Potomac and the Army of Northern Virginia, and was often specially detailed for the execution of orders of the most delicate character and requiring the exercise of unflinching bravery and coolness of judgment. As a soldier he won the love and respect of his comrades, and commanded the admiration of his superior officers. He was promoted through the minor grades of military service for gallantry, and when wounded and captured at the battle of Petersburg he was a first lieu-

tenant. He was sent a prisoner to Johnson's Island, where he remained until the close of the war.

After his release from prison he came immediately to this city, and entered the office of the late Dr. Thomas Miller. He graduated from the National Medical College (Medical Department, Columbian University,) in March, 1867, and immediately afterwards was appointed Resident Physician to the Columbia Hospital, then located at the corner of Fourteenth street and Massachusetts avenue. During the temporary occupancy of the "Hill Mansion" by the hospital he had a private office near by, on Vermont avenue. When this institution was transferred to its present location, he removed his private office to No. 1731 Pennsylvania Avenue, but continued to discharge the duties of Resident Physician until he was appointed Assistant Surgeon, which position he held for several years. Subsequently he was elected a Director of the hospital, and continued in that connection until his death.

After the death of George, the son of Dr. Thomas Miller, he accepted the invitation of his friend and preceptor, and removed his office and residence to 1330 New York avenue, where he died. He was never a partner of Dr. Miller, but as his pupil, friend, associate, and colleague he commanded his confidence and admiration. Dr. Miller selected him as the successor of his beloved and lamented son, and during his later years fostered ASHFORD's aspirations and professional success as only a father could do. The pupil and associate never forgot the preceptor and friend.

Whilst occupying the office at 1731 Pennsylvania avenue, jointly with Dr. S. C. Busey, during the early part of 1870, the project to establish a hospital for sick children in this

city was first discussed. It was there that ASHFORD, the late lamented Drinkard, and Drs. W. W. Johnston and Busey, the surviving members of the original staff of Attending Physicians, arranged the preliminary agreement, which, after having been submitted to and maturely considered by the five original staff of Consulting Physicians and other prominent and benevolent citizens, was completed, and the Children's Hospital for the District of Columbia was organized with the charter under which it has continued to operate. In 1870 he was elected one of the Attending Physicians of the institution, and assigned by the Board of Consulting Physicians to the department of surgery. With the admission of the first patient to the hospital, February 1st, 1871, who was suffering from hip-joint disease, began his practical studies of the joint affections of children. During the twelve succeeding years he devoted himself to this branch of surgery with the zeal and ardor of an intelligent and skillful enthusiast. The records of the hospital attest the brilliant results he had attained in this special department, as well as in the wider field of general surgery, and the surgical ward will ever remain a monument to his skill, good judgment, and operative dexterity. He was not, however, exclusively a surgeon, but had, with unusual success, grasped the opportunities of a general practitioner, and brought to his aid the combination of rare attainments of a clinical and operative surgeon and an experienced and successful obstetrician and gynæcologist.

At the reorganization of the Medical Faculty of the University of Georgetown, in 1876, he was appointed Professor of Surgery, and immediately afterwards chosen by his colleagues Dean. On Tuesday preceding his death he sum-

moned in person his colleagues to his house, that he might surrender the office of Dean and transfer the books and accounts to his successor. That melancholy interview was the last held between him and the college faculty. He bade them all an affectionate farewell, and retired to his chamber for the last time. As a medical scholar and teacher he was extensively and accurately learned and faithful, diligent and conscientious.

For more than twenty years preceding, efforts had been made to establish in this city a general hospital, but not until Dr. ASHFORD assumed the leadership did the project promise success. To him more than to any other person the Garfield Memorial Hospital owes its present prospect of permanent establishment.

He had occupied many positions of honor and confidence in the medical societies of the D. C., the last being the Presidency of the Medical Society of the D. C., from which he retired on the first of January, 1883.

Dr. ASHFORD married Isabella, the eldest daughter of Moses Kelly, Esq. He left five children—four sons and one daughter, a baby but one month old—at the time of his death.

In early life he became a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, but on his marriage, in 1872, he joined the First Presbyterian Church, in whose communion he lived and died.

Dr. ASHFORD was one of the founders and most experienced members of this society. He was prompt and constant in attendance, and always took an active interest and participation in its deliberations. The last literary effort of his life was an essay read before this society, in which were

set forth the results of an elaborate and instructive study of the changes which take place in the mucous membrane of the uterus during menstruation. This paper was illustrated by numerous microscopic sections, made under his supervision.

As an obstetrician and gynaecologist he had won a high reputation. His remarkable success in the surgery of the female pelvic organs commanded the admiration of his professional associates and acquaintances, and his counsel and assistance were almost universally sought by his colleagues in those cases requiring unusual skill, experience, and operative dexterity. His advice was never refused to those who sought it. He was ever ready to lend a helping hand and share responsibilities, and to the rich and poor alike he was equally polite and attentive.

The foregoing memorial notices so fully and truthfully set forth his personal characteristics that but little remains to be said. His imperturbable temperament and self-possession were not less remarkable than his discretion and reticence. These qualities marked him as a wise counsellor, a prudent and cautious physician, and a man of commanding influence. He was a man of positive convictions, yet never offensively obtruded his opinions upon others. His judgment was so evenly balanced with moderation, and his manner so free from bias and prejudice that the more intimate the acquaintanceship the stronger became the ties of personal friendship.

The early death of Dr. ASHFORD is another illustration of the disastrous effects of overwork and strain. It was generally known that he held a very large and profitable clientele, but his most intimate associates were entirely igno-

rant of the enormous amount of unremunerative work he was daily performing. To this latter class of work he gave the same attention and assiduous care as to that which offered full compensation. The strain, overwork, worry, and exhaustion cannot be charged exclusively to the unremunerated labor, but it is the experience of most physicians that the most unreasonable demands upon their time, and the most vexatious claims upon their patience and endurance, are made by those whose gratitude ceases with their recovery. In the department of professional life to which this Society devotes exclusive attention, the cares and trials are onerous and perplexing, but are fortunately confined to children, who offer no obstacles to the exercise of an untrammelled will and sound judgment in the treatment of their maladies, and to women, who are the physicians' best friends. The untimely death of our friend and associate should, however, admonish his survivors, that while his example and life present very many characteristics worthy of the highest commendation, not to forget the lessons which his sacrifices, suffering, and death teach.

SAMUEL C. BUSEY, M. D.,

W. W. JOHNSTON, M. D.,

THOMAS E. McARDLE, M. D.,

*Committee.*











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